



H.R. 189 – Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park Act of 2007

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 189 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) on January 4, 2007. The bill was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources and ordered to be reported by voice vote.

H.R. 189 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House of Representatives on October 22, 2007.

SUMMARY

H.R. 189 allows the Secretary of the Interior to establish the “Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park” in New Jersey, as part of the National Park System.

The area to be designated consists of approximately 109 acres.

Additionally, the legislation requires the Secretary to prepare a general management plan for the park within 3 fiscal years. That report will be issued to the House Committee on Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 189 also establishes a commission to assist and advise the Secretary in the development and implementation of the general management plan for the park.

The Commission will be composed of 9 members appointed by the Secretary of the Interior.

BACKGROUND

In November of 2001 Congress passed H.R.146, the “Great Falls Historic District Study Act of 2001.” This legislation authorized the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the lands in question to see if they met the criteria to become a part of the national park system.

The National Park Service completed the study in 2006 and concluded that the area met the criteria for national significance, but that it did not meet the criteria for suitability, and feasibility, and the National Park Service felt that land did not need to be managed.

After the study was completed, historians made arguments to the Committee and wrote letters arguing that the land in question should be part of the National Park System.

The Great Falls Historic District is the site of the first planned industrial development in the United States. Alexander Hamilton selected the site in 1792, largely because of the 70 foot tall Great Falls of the Passaic, which would provide a source of hydro power for industry.

The Great Falls Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976.

**Note – Republicans on the Committee have expressed concern over the Great Falls Historic District being placed in the National Parks System. The NPS stated, in testimony before the Committee, that the area in question did not need to be serviced by the park system and would place an unnecessary burden on their already backlogged system.*

COST

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) “Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 189 would cost the National Park Service (NPS) \$22 million over the 2008-2012 period and \$1 million a year thereafter. We estimate that enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues”.

STAFF CONTACT

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